

ENHANCING THE MINISTRY OF THE CHAPLAIN
THROUGH CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

Course 85/7
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In the modern military environment, the varied demands on the chaplain are of such a nature that he must rely upon every legitimate method of extending his personal ministry. Such methods are limited only by regulation, his commander's philosophy or the chaplain's own lack of ingenuity. One of the most effective ways a busy chaplain can extend his ministry is through the use of and emphasis upon Christian literature. For the purpose of this paper I am limiting "Christian literature" to include books and magazines easily definable as Christian, as opposed to cultic; and inspirational, as opposed to polemic. I am not including the use of tracts and their distribution, as overt evangelistic methods lie outside the primary goal of this study. The chaplain, in all of his work, must be an encourager and helper and not a catalyst for argument, debate or destroyer of relationships. So the literature he shares, loans, suggests for reading or gives away must be inspirational to a broad reading audience as well as helpful to those who have specific needs or problems.

It has been my observation during seventeen years in the Chaplain's Corps that not many chaplains have emphasized Christian literature in their ministry. Could this failure be due to a lack of appreciation for the power of the printed page? Like many other proverbs, perhaps we have forgotten the warning that "the pen is mightier than the sword" and that the printed page really has power to mold the minds of men.

We are led to believe that Benjamin Franklin once said, "Give me twenty-six lead soldiers and I will conquer the world."¹ He was speaking of course, of the 26 letters of the English alphabet cast in printer's type. He knew the power of the printed page and so did Martin Luther, who had circulated hundreds of thousands of pamphlets through Europe preceeding and during the Reformation. The impact of the ministry of many of the greatest Christian leaders has been increased through their use of literature. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, may be best known for his preaching, but, in fact, he was also a powerful writer and the founder in 1782 of Britain's first tract society. Other founding fathers of great religious impact such as Martin Luther and John Calvin were actively involved in writing and distributing inspirational literature. Missionaries such as William Carey and Adoniram Judson found the greatest effect of their ministry was accomplished through pamphlets and booklets which they distributed.

Whether viewing world history on a grand scale or my own life on a microscopic scale, I come to the conclusion that the printed page is a powerful force. The potential of the printed page is so great, its outreach so broad, its results so abiding, that any

¹Literature Evangelism, George Verwer 1977 STL Publishers, London, England, page 13.

chaplain desiring to have a proper impact on his community dare not ignore the use of Christian literature. A book will go where a chaplain cannot, may not, or will not go. The book can work twenty-four hours a day and never tire. It cannot be insulted. It knows no moods and is always ready when the reader may be in the best frame of mind. Many who make up the total military community, who never attend chapel or other conventional religious services, may be helped by Christian literature. In bringing understanding on a given issue, in forming convictions, in contributing to healthy devotion and inspiration, the printed page is often more effective than the spoken word. Certainly it can be said that no religious system owes more to a book than does Christianity. This is easily demonstrated in the lives of individuals as well as the history of the Christian movement. "People of the Book", they have been called, and because they were so related to the Book, they have appreciated any and all literature which helped them live a life in full accord with the Book of books.

Accepting then the proposition that Christian literature can be a powerful influence for good in the lives of receptive people and that the military community certainly is no exception, I propose to suggest various ways an alert and helpful chaplain can enhance his ministry. For consideration, I have selected four types of chaplain assignments, troop, chapel center, hospital and confinement and will give some illustrations and suggestions

for Christian literature use in each of these categories.

Most chaplains begin their military ministry as an Asst. Bde. or BN. Chaplain. Such an assignment offers the greatest opportunity to work with and influence young troops. And here it is that the newly commissioned chaplain sets the habit pattern for his ministry. If, at this early juncture in his career, he relies upon literature to deepen and extend his service to both those who come to him and those to whom he goes, he will have an effective ministry.

Beginning with the weekly bulletin, a chaplain could include a startling quote from some book he has just read with the note that the book is available from the Post Library, or Chapel Center Library or even for loan from the chaplain's personal library. Another method is to take three minutes during the service and give a brief but enthusiastic review of a Christian book of current interest and suggest they read it. Always make clear the title and where they can get the book.

In counselling sessions, be prepared to offer from the chapel supply or your own library-a book you believe to be very helpful in the area of the counselee's need. Every experienced chaplain ought to have at his finger tips inexpensive paperback books covering subject matters which are frequently the source of counselling sessions. (e.g. finances, separation, infidelity, child abuse, discipline, drugs and alcohol abuse, pre and post marriage, etc.)

At least once a month, a chaplain should visit every day room in his unit. There he can leave a fresh supply of Christian magazines and a few cheap paperback books. Not only should day rooms be visited, but the barracks ought to be visited, particularly if the troops to whom you are assigned are basic trainees. They may not have freedom to move about the post, and any reading material if offered, or even left surreptitiously, will be read by someone.

Never overlook the opportunity as you visit with other officers and senior NCO's, to talk about some good book you've read, or, as you perceive their particular needs or interests, be free to recommend a book for their reading. In fact, the more you know about a person, the more you can meet his needs through appropriate literature. One day I was visiting with a Colonel (who incidentally had been Chief of Staff for General Westmoreland) and sensed by his questions and the turn of the conversation that he was facing some inner trauma. I offered to deliver to his office a small book which came to mind, which I thought he would enjoy reading and be pertinent to his situation. He accepted the offer and for nearly ten years now I have received a Christmas card from him, and he frequently mentions how that book, at that critical time, tremendously helped him. On another occasion I was talking and listening to a Lt. Col. who had been passed over for promotion to Colonel. My presence there, as his concerned chaplain, may have meant something, but it

was a book I left with him to read which really helped him, and, incidentally, was the real start of a family friendship which lasted until we were transferred to different posts. One day, while visiting with some officers on a training exercise, one officer began to ask me about what I believed concerning "abortion." We talked for a while on the subject and then drifted on to something else. A few days later I left with him an excellent book on the subject, for I suspected he was personally wrestling with the issue and not merely "academically" interested. Later his profuse "thanks" was related so sincerely that I am convinced the book helped solve a personal family problem. On one other occasion I saw the results of another chaplain's emphasis with literature. Not having at that time a jeep and driver assigned to me, I called the motor pool requesting transportation. When the driver arrived and saw I was a chaplain, he began to talk about a book he was reading which another chaplain had given to him. It happened to be, "The Late Great Planet Earth", and the young driver was intensely interested in discussing it. One day a young Captain told me he had just received orders for an unaccompanied tour of duty to a near east country. I happened to have read an interesting missionary book about some current missionary endeavors in that country and what the living conditions were like, etc. I suggested the book to him and his immediate reply was, "I would like to read the book. Could I borrow your copy?" Of course, I was glad to

and he seemed very appreciative as he returned it a few weeks later. This leads me to believe that just about every situation in military life offers an opportunity to an alert chaplain to help a member of his unit via the medium of literature.

The Chapel Center ministry - as with the hospital - reaches the widest possible military audience in that the chaplain ministers to active duty personnel, their dependents and retirees. Such a huge divergence of need and interests demands that the chaplain, in order to have a totally effective ministry, rely upon widescale use of Christian literature.

The Chapel Center bulletin or monthly newsletter offers valuable space for a brief book quote or suggested reading list. Again, books suggested should be readily available from either the Post or Chapel Center Library or a near-by religious supply center. Some chaplains at "isolated" posts have arranged for a book table where a representative selection of Christian books are for sale. Usually a member of the PWOC is responsible for the setting up and taking down of the table, and for storage of the books.

Usually, it is not difficult to find some one interested in the chapel program who is an avid reader and will gladly give a brief book review during the worship service or for the PWOC or PMOC meeting. The involvement of lay people in the various programs of the chapel - even if it only is giving enthusiastic book reviews, will build interest and certainly develop

the lay person.

Some Chapel Centers have a large, dependent ministry, involving women's Bible Studies. Of course, each of these groups provides an excellent opportunity to make each participant aware of new books recently purchased by the chapel or by the chaplain. If the Post is situated near a civilian community supporting a religious bookstore, the manager of the store could be invited in for some family pot luck dinners to talk briefly about the whole range of Christian books available - children's, adult fiction, Bible study and inspirational. Following such a presentation, the chapel could sponsor a family reading program for two months. Anyone who read five or more books during that time would receive a Certificate of Achievement and special recognition during a chapel service or the next family social. All of this emphasis upon reading will strengthen the pulpit ministry, for Christian literature is but a powerful reinforcer of truths verbally expressed.

The outpatient section of the hospital and the dental clinic offer a golden opportunity for the chaplain to provide short-term reading materials. While patients are waiting to see a doctor, or for an x-ray, or for a prescription to be filled, they are bored and desire something to occupy the minutes. Religious, non-sectarian, but inspirational magazines left on the tables will be gratefully read or glanced at by scores of people. While regularly visiting the registered hospital patients, the chaplain should be alert to

any expressed interest in reading religious material. Such reading is not generally available from the "library cart" circulated courtesy of the hospital or Post Library. Long-term patients or terminally ill individuals may be the most receptive to Christian reading materials. However, these patients may not be able to read very well because of the small type or concentration problems, so the chaplain ought to have access to condensed, giant-print books for recommended reading.

Paralleling the restrictive nature of the hospital patient is the soldier confined to the stockade. Both have time on their hands and both may desire mental distraction from their circumstance. The chaplain ministering to those in confinement has the opportunity to very carefully guide the soldier in a planned reading program. As Chaplain King noted, "You must constantly point them to the Book - the Bible. Believe it or not, this is the most well-read book in prisons today. Many inmates not only read, but memorize large portions of Scripture. But their Bible study is most helpful when it is guided intelligently."² For extended study a chaplain could safely recommend a correspondence course from the following:

The Emmaus Courses
Emmaus Bible School
156 North Oak Park Avenue
Chicago, Illinois

²Military Chaplains' Review, DA Pam 165-118 Summer 1978
Chap (Maj) Wayne King, page 49.

Light of Life Courses

World Gospel Crusades

Box 42051

Los Angeles, Calif.

The Navigator Courses

The Navigators Box 1801

Colorado Springs, CO.

In conclusion, I have provided sources of books and magazines for chaplains. These may be in some cases obtained free of charge; and in some cases at considerable discount, if purchased through the Chaplain's Fund; and in some cases may be purchased at discount personally by the chaplain. The list of publishers is by no means complete. I have deliberately omitted denominational publishing houses assuming that each chaplain knows his own, what they offer, and their unique distribution arrangements. As indicated earlier, this paper does not concern itself with tracts and pamphlets, so of course, such sources of supply have not been included. Where there is incomplete information about some publisher's policy of selling directly to chaplains, it is due to the fact that they as yet have not responded to my inquiry. If a chaplain is interested in a particular publishing house, a simple request for a current catalog and sales policy will be quickly answered. It is worth noting that all publishers receive books which are slightly damaged or no longer selling, back from bookstores. Such damaged or obsolete inventory is frequently given free to legitimate

ministries, particularly prison and hospital ministries, where there is assurance given that the books will be effectively and quickly distributed without cost. Books for day rooms and chapel lending library use, particularly in APO situations, can frequently be obtained free of charge, if the chaplain is willing to accept damaged books from a publisher.

Almost all magazine publishers print an over-run, beyond the normal circulation needs. These they use for promotional purposes. Again, a letter from an active duty chaplain in letterhead to the attached list of magazine publishers, requesting back copies for free distribution as suggested in this paper, will be promptly answered. Make it plain how many you can effectively distribute and exactly where they will be placed.

Underlying the main thesis of this paper is the assumption that you, the chaplain, a minister of the gospel, are, by personal choice and vocational commitment, an avid reader. If not, now is the time to set some personal goals in reading Christian books and sharing what you've gained with someone in your unit. You'll be richer for it, and, without a doubt, your ministry will be enhanced and enlarged.

Magazine Publishers

Athletes in Action
206 North D. Street
San Bernardino, Calif. 92402

Campus Life Magazine
Box 419
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Catholic Digest
P. O. Box 43090
St. Paul, MN. 56164

Christian Herald
P. O. Box 371
Chappaqua, NY. 10514

Christian Life
Gundersen & Schmale Road
Carol Stream, Illinois 60187

Christian Reader
336 Gundersen Drive
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Christian Review
2751 Buford Hwy. NE Ste. 720
Atlanta, GA. 30324

Eternity Magazine
1716 Spruce Street
Philadelphia, PA. 19103

Guideposts
747 Third Avenue
New York, NY. 10017

Moody Monthly
820 N. LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60610

Sunshine Magazine
East Route 16
Litchfield, Ill. 62056

Decision Magazine
1300 Harmon Place
Minneapolis, MN. 55403

Book Publishers

KREGEL PUBLICATIONS P. O. Box 2607 Grand Rapids, MI. 49501

Type of Books - Theological and Polemic
Discount - 10%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

WILLIAM B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING 255 Jefferson Avenue SE

Grand Rapids, MI. 49503
Type of Books - Theological
Discount - Normal
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS 2861 McGaw Irvine, CA. 92714

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount - 40%
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY 2220 Parklake Drive NE Suite 515

Atlanta, GA. 30345
Type of Books - Bibles and Scripture portions
Discount - Sometimes free
May Be Purchased - Offering basis

BROADMAN PRESS 127 Ninth Avenue N. Nashville, TN. 37203

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

CHRISTIAN PUBLICATIONS INC. 25 South 10th Harrisburg, PA. 17101

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

J. B. LIPPINCOTT CO. P. O. Box 7 Philadelphia, PA. 19105

Type of Books - Inspirational, Novels
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

MOODY PRESS 820 LaSalle Street N. Chicago, Ill. 60610

Type of Books - Inspirational and Theological
Discount - up to 40%
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

BETHANY FELLOWSHIP 6820 Auto Club Road Minneapolis, MN. 55438

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

LOGOS INTERNATIONAL 201 Church St. Plainfield, NJ. 07060

Type of Books - Charismatic
Discount - 50-55%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

ACCENT BOOKS 12100 W. Sixth Avenue Denver, CO. 80215

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

BIBLE VOICE P. O. Box 7491 Van Nuys, Calif. 91409

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

CREATIVE RESOURCES Waco, Texas

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

ABINGDON PRESS 201 Eighth Ave. S. Nashville, TN. 37202

Type of Books - Social awareness
Discount - None
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

WHITAKER HOUSE Pittsburgh & Colfax Streets Springdale,
PA. 15144

Type of Books - Charismatic
Discount - Up to 50%
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

PILGRIM PUBLICATIONS, Pasadena, Texas 77501

Type of Books - Puritan Sermons
Discount - None
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

GOOD NEWS PUBLISHERS 9825 W. Roosevelt Rd. Westchester

Ill. 60153

Type of Books - Inspirational, "condensed Christian classics"
Discount - 20% cash...15% if billed
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

NAVPRESS P. O. Box 20, Colorado Springs, CO. 80901

Type of Books - Bible studies
Discount -
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

VISION HOUSE 1507 E. McFadden Avenue Santa Ana, CA. 92703

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount - 40%
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

SWORD OF THE LORD PUB. Box 1099 Murfreesboro, TN. 37130

Type of Books - Theological, Conservative
Discount - 50%
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

KENNETH HAGIN MINISTRIES Box 50127 Tulsa, OK. 74150

Type of Books - Charismatic
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

CREATION HOUSE 499 Gundersen Road Carol Stream, IL. 60187

Type of Books - Inspirational, Charismatic
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

INTER-VARSITY PRESS Box F Downers Grove, IL. 60515

Type of Books - College age, Social awareness
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

HERE'S LIFE PUBLISHERS P. O. Box 1576 San Bernardino
Calif. 92402

Type of Books - Evangelistic, College age
Discount - Yes
May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

HARPER & ROW PUBLISHERS Keystone Industrial Park Scranton,
PA. 18512

Type of Books - Social Significance
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

CHRIST FOR THE WORLD PUBLISHERS Box 3428 Orlando, FL. 32802

Type of Books - Evangelistic
Discount - 40%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

THOMAS NELSON BIBLE PUB. 407 7th Ave. S. Nashville, TN. 37203

Type of Books - Bibles
Discount - Up to 50%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

SERVANT PUBLICATIONS Box 8617 Ann Arbor, MI. 48107

Type of Books - Catholic, Charismatic
Discount -
May Be Purchased -

HUNTER MINISTRIES 1600 Townhurst Houston, Texas 77043

Type of Books - Charismatic, Popular level
Discount - 40%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

THE ATTIC PRESS Stony Point Route 2 Greenwood, S. C. 29646

Type of Books - Inspirational
Discount - 40%
May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

BETA BOOKS 10857 Valiente Ct. San Diego, Calif. 92124

Type of Books - Creation and Allied subjects

Discount - 40-50%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST INT. Arrowhead Springs

San Bernardino, CA. 92414

Type of Books - Evangelistic & Polemic

Discount - Up to 40%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

ZONDERVAN PUBLISHING 1415 Lake Drive SE Grand Rapids,

Michigan 49506

Type of Books - Inspirational & Theological

Discount - Up to 40%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

PAULIST PRESS 545 Island Road Ramsey, N.J. 07446

Type of Books - Catholic

Discount -

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

MOREHOUSE-BARLOW 78 Danbury Road Wilton, CT. 06897

Type of Books - Theological & Social awareness

Discount -

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

IMPACT BOOKS 137 W. Jefferson Kirkwood, MO. 63122

Type of Books - Charismatic

Discount - Up to 40%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

MULTNOMAH PRESS 10209 SE Division Portland, Oregon 97266

Type of Books - Inspirational and Bible studies

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

CRUSADE PUBLISHERS, INC. P. O. Box 357 Mt. Juliet, TN. 37122

Type of Books - Bibles

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

WILLIAM COLLINS CO. 2080 W. 117th Street Cleveland, OH. 44111

Type of Books - Bibles and Dictionaries

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY Old Tappan, N. J. 07675

Type of Books - Inspirational

Discount - 10%

May Be Purchased - Chaplains Fund APO Only

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE CRUSADE Fort Washington, PA. 19034

Type of Books - Conservative, Inspirational

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

GOSPEL LIGHT P. O. Box 1650 Glendale, Calif. 91209

Type of Books - Popular, Inspirational

Discount - 20%

May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

FOUNDATION PRESS 1121 N. Kraemer Place Anaheim, CA. 92806

Type of Books - Inspirational

Discount - Up to 40%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

BAKER BOOK HOUSE P. O. Box 6287 Grand Rapids, MI. 49506

Type of Books - Theological

Discount - 10%

May Be Purchased - Personal and Chaplain's Fund

DAVID C. COOK PUBLISHING 850 N. Grove Ave. Elgin, IL. 60120

Type of Books - Popular, Inspirational

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

LOIZEAUX BROTHERS 1238 Corlies Ave. Neptune, NJ. 07753

Type of Books - Bible studies

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

VICTOR BOOKS 1825 College Ave. Wheaton, IL. 60187

Type of Books - Inspirational, Bible studies

Discount - 20%

May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

SEABURY PRESS 815 Second Avenue NY.,NY. 10017

Type of Books - Theological, Social Awareness

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS P. O. Box 80 Wheaton, IL. 60187

Type of Books - Inspirational

Discount - Up to 40%

May Be Purchased - Chaplain's Fund

ACTON HOUSE, IN. 5005 Newport Dr. Rolling Meadows, IL. 60008

Type of Books - Inspirational

Discount -

May Be Purchased -

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N. J., Fleming H. Revell, Revised 1961.

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STL Publishers, 1977.